

VISION 2012

Westville Lake

A Plan for the Next Ten Years



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Vision 2012

Our Ten Year Plan to is designed to bring you more enjoyment at the Westville Lake and keep the flood control facility in top condition.

Vision 2012 is an evolving document, a planning tool that will promote and encourage additional projects and improvements to our facilities and programs solely for the visiting public at Westville Lake. The project management team will use this document during the annual budget process to ensure the missions of the Corps and the approved goals of the community are implemented.

We present this plan to get your insights, comments and recommendations so we can better tailor our vision to your requests. We appreciate your feedback!

History

As a result of severe flooding that occurred during the hurricanes of 1936, 1938 and 1955, a series of flood control projects were built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the Quinebaug River. Westville Lake was authorized by the Flood Control Act dated 18 August 1941 (Public Law 228, 77th Congress, 1st Session). Authorization for development and use of the reservoir area for public recreation is contained in Section 4 of the Flood Control Act of 1944, approved 22 December 1944.

Westville Lake, completed in August 1962, is located on the Quinebaug River, 1.3 miles west of the town of Southbridge, Massachusetts. The total area of the project is 1,082 acres, of which 578 acres were purchased in fee and 504 acres are held in flowage easement. In conjunction with other Thames River Basin projects, Westville Lake provides protection to Southbridge and downstream communities, such as Putnam and Norwich, Connecticut. As of December 2001 the dam has prevented over \$25.5 million in cumulative flood damages.

Today

Natural and recreation resources at Westville Lake provide social, economic and environmental benefits. The following tables are based on 1999 visitation figures:

Social Benefits

Recreation Facilities

- 1 recreation areas
- 44 picnic sites
- 0 camping sites
- 0 playgrounds
- 0 swimming areas

- 1 trail miles
- 0 fishing docks
- 1 boat ramps
- 0 marinas
- 0 marina slips

Recreation Visits (person-trips)

- 55,700 in total
- 10,583 picnickers
- 0 campers
- 0 swimmers
- 0 water skiers
- 1,114 boaters
- 2,785 sightseers
- 6,127 fishermen
- 0 hunters
- 34,534 others

Social Benefits in Perspective

By providing opportunities for active recreation, Corps lakes also help overcome one of the most significant of the nation's health problems: lack of physical activity. Exercise opportunities like those offered at Corps lakes also have a positive effect on individuals' mental and emotional outlook and sense of well-being by:

- Strengthening family ties and friendships.
- Providing opportunities for children to develop personal skills and social values while building self-esteem.
- Expanding knowledge about the area's nature and culture.
- Increasing everyone's safety when participating in recreational activities in and outside of Corps recreational areas.

Economic Benefits

Economic Benefits*

- 55,700 visits per year.
- \$0.73 million in visitor spending within 30 miles of the Corps lake. 66% of the spending was captured by local economy as direct sales effects.

With multiplier effects, visitor trip spending resulted in:

- \$0.80 million in total sales.
- \$0.42 million in total income.
- Supported 21 jobs in the local community surrounding the lake.

* From visitor trip spending within 30 miles of the lake only, does not include purchases of durable goods.

Economic Benefits in Perspective

- Visitors to Corps lakes spend money on trip expenses such as lodging and meals, and on durable goods like boats and campers.
- This spending contributes to the local and national economies by supporting jobs and generating income to those who directly and indirectly provide goods and services to Corps visitors.
- Revenues from visitor spending represent a sizable component of the economy in many communities around Corps lakes.

Environmental Benefits

Environmental Resources

- 1,059 land acres
- 23 water acres
- 3 shoreline miles
- 14 acres reforested
- 202 environmental interpretation contacts

Environmental Resources in Perspective

Recreation experiences increase:

- Motivation to learn more about the environment.
- Sensitivity toward the environment.
- Deeper understanding of environmental processes.
- Awareness of environmental issues.
- Knowledge about the environment and one's place in it.

Resources

As the annual budget has remained fixed for the past ten years and is not projected to increase in the next ten years, our expenditures increase every year. With the cost of living increasing we too are affected. Everything from gas and oil, to repairing a 40-year-old facility, drain our resources – therefore, we continually look for new ways to accomplish our mission.

Through interpretation and outreach education we want to build partnerships with local business and community groups. Volunteers donated almost \$18,000 of time and materials in 2002 and we should top that in 2003. The following are plans and ideas in each of our major program areas. We are looking for feedback and input on how we can accomplish all of our goals and objectives within the next ten years.



Operation and Maintenance of Flood Control Facilities

Goal: To maintain all flood control facilities in a high state of readiness.

Objectives:

2002 Maintenance of Bridges. As part of our public safety plan we inspect our public bridges every two-years. Non-public bridges are inspected every five-years.

2003 Window Replacement at Westville Dam Gatehouse. We plan to replace inefficient Plexiglas and glass windows at the Westville Dam Gatehouse with double paned “Lexan” windows to reduce heat loss and to prevent breakage from rocks.

2003 Lighting Upgrades. Existing external lighting on the spillway side will also be replaced with new lights of comparable wattage to illuminate the spillway for flood control and maintenance operations. The new lights will be more cost efficient and protected from vandalism with Lexan shields.

2004 Emergency Access Road Improvement. The access road to the downstream toe (base) of Westville Dam will be upgraded to better handle drainage off of the surrounding hillside and provide a more suitable, non-erosive surface, facilitating inspections and other normal maintenance work.

Recreation Management, Interpretation, Environmental Education and Outreach

Goal: Promote, improve and expand outdoor recreation opportunities in a safe and family oriented environment while protecting and enhancing the project resources and surrounding environment. To increase awareness of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the valuable resources we are managing.

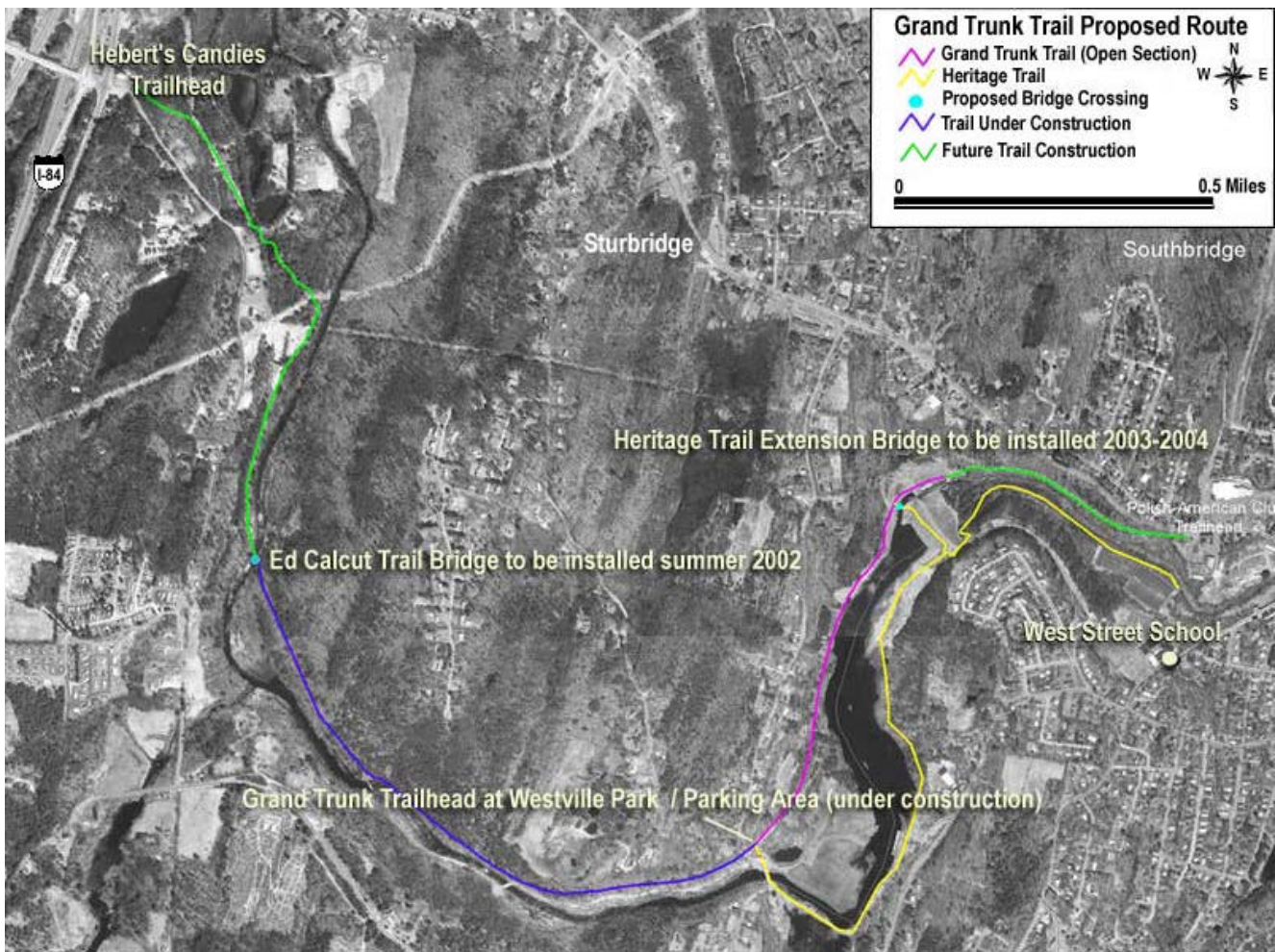
Objectives:

2002 Quinebaug River Crossing Bridge ****COMPLETED**** A hiking trail now crosses an accessible bridge on the Quinebaug River, linking the Grand Trunk Trail to the northern section of Westville Lake and beyond. This project would not have been possible without a generous grant from the Quinebaug/Shetucket Corridor in Massachusetts. The men and women at Westville Lake have provided the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers share by installing the approaches and abutments to the bridge as well as the decking.

2002-2003 Parking Lot Rehabilitation at Park Entrance. We have rehabilitated the parking area immediately adjacent to the entrance of the park. Improvements included delineation by concrete curbing, an asphalt entrance apron, and a crushed asphalt parking lot to allow drainage, and parking bumpers.



2003-2004 Completion of Westville Loop Trail. A connecting bridge at the inlet to Westville Dam, donated from the Big Dig in Boston, will close the loop between the Heritage Trail Extension leading to the Westville Lake Recreation Area Shuttleville Section, and the Grand Trunk Trail leading to the main Westville Lake Recreation Area. This will also provide visitors with a fascinating look at the Westville Dam, up and downstream. Plans for the abutments are under design at this time. We expect to receive the bridge at the Westville Dam within the next six to twelve months and plan to install it as soon as possible, hopefully long before the end of 2004



2004-2005 Accessible Lakeside Fishing. On the foundations of the



Shuttleville Manufacturing facility, we plan to resurface and replace the broken concrete, install railings for safety, and provide a wheelchair accessible path from a parking lot immediately adjacent to the area. A new approach to the Shuttleville area off of Old South Street prior to the collapsed section will have guardrails for your safety. The old cart road leading from the Shuttleville facility

will be closed to vehicular traffic at this time and maintained for foot traffic.

2006 Playground for the Kids. To provide a more enjoyable experience at the Westville Lake Recreation Area, a playground will be constructed in the area south of the larger picnic shelter.

2002-2007 Completion of the Grand Trunk Trail (GTT). Over the next five years, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will complete the GTT sections within public lands directly under its management, providing a trail, which for the most part is accessible to all, beginning at Westville Dam at Marjorie Lane and concluding in the area of Farquhar Road. Others, e.g., the towns of Sturbridge and Southbridge, will complete sections ending at Hebert Candy with help from the Hebert family, and at the Polish American Club in Southbridge.

2005 Rehabilitation of the Old Mashapaug Road Canoe Launch.



We plan to place a small concrete pad at the launch area and grade the approach road to the adjacent parking area to correct existing erosion. Repair existing road drains and placement of swales will direct water off the road before it gathers erosive force.

2007 – 2008 Rehabilitation of Ball fields. Over the past forty years the playing fields at Westville Lake have provided uncounted hours of enjoyment for the residents of Southbridge and Sturbridge, as well as others. Whereas drainage of the fields is good, the turf is only fair. We plan to provide a better growing medium for grass, doing half the area in one season, the other during the next.

2009 – 2011 Repave Park Access Roads and Parking Lots. To continue to provide you with a safe park, free of the hazards of crumbling pavement, we will repave the roads, then the parking lots within the park, and finally the roads at the Westville Dam facility.

2012 Improve Winter Access to Ice Skating Area. In the area around the ice skating rink, we plan to install a small shelter for those who need to sit out of the wind and take a break from skating, or to change from shoes to skates or skates to shoes. We will also be grading the rink to provide a more uniform depth of water.

Cultural and Historical Resources, Natural Resources and the Environment

Goals: Identify, preserve, celebrate and promote historical and cultural resources with the least amount of impact while enhancing the public's knowledge of their significance. Natural resources will be conserved, protected, managed and restored for future generations. Support sustainable use of renewable resources.

Objectives:

Annual Boundary Maintenance

2003 Continue non-emergency water release coordination

2005 Master Plan (letter supplement)

2006 Environmental Assessment Update

2007 – 2008 Historical Exhibits. We are researching the recent (1950s) and older history of the Village of Westville as well as the Grand Trunk Railroad. We are working with local historians to collect all information relevant to Westville and will make it available to all who walk through the Recreation Area, reminding them that the area was once a thriving village. This information will be placed on historical waysides, showing pictures with descriptive text. Other kiosks will describe the trail system and provide safety tips for trail users.

Partners

In these times, the Federal Government is tasked to do more with less. Now more than ever, partnering with other agencies, civic groups and users of our resources is the best way to do business. Below are many, but not all of the “Partners” the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers works with at Westville Lake.

Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs	Southbridge Youth Soccer Association
State Historic Preservation Office	Quinebaug – Shetucket National Heritage Corridor
Local Historical Societies	Massachusetts District QSHC
National Guard	Grand Trunk Trail Blazers
Abutters	Millennium Power/ U.S. Generating
Town of Sturbridge	National Grid
Town of Southbridge	The Nature Conservancy
Massachusetts Environmental Police	Opacum Land Trust
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Thames River Partnership
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Representatives and Senators
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	Rails to Trails
Massachusetts Riverways Program	Southbridge and Sturbridge Libraries
Massachusetts Public Access Board	AmeriCorps
Thames River Flood Control Commission	Student Conservation Corps
Southbridge News	West Street Elementary School
Worcester Telegram & Gazette	Worcester County Sheriff
WESO	U.S. Geological Survey
	Natural Heritage

Conclusion

As we looking forward over the next ten years, we will strive to appreciate and conserve our cultural, historical, recreational and natural resources. We are committed to enhancing your experiences at Westville Lake. New volunteers and partnerships with residents, other agencies and local governments are key to our success in preserving the quality of life in our community.

For More Information: Call, email or write

East Brimfield Lake Office
24 Riverview Ave.
Fiskdale, (Sturbridge), MA
01518-1243
(508) 347-3705
(508) 347-8732 (fax)

Project Manager:

[Keith W. Beecher](mailto:keith.w.beecher@usace.army.mil) keith.w.beecher@usace.army.mil

Park Rangers:

[Thomas A. Chamberland](mailto:thomas.a.chamberland@usace.army.mil)
thomas.a.chamberland@usace.army.mil
[Merlon A. Bassett](mailto:merlon.a.bassett@usace.army.mil)
merlon.a.bassett@usace.army.mil

To get to East Brimfield Lake

Take the Mass Pike 90 to exit 9 and then Route 20 West. **OR** Take Interstate 84 to exit 3 and then Route 20 West through Sturbridge, 3 miles to Riverview Avenue on left. Follow signs to Project office. Please drive carefully

To get to Westville Lake

I-90 (Massachusetts Turnpike) Exit 9, or I-84 Exit 3 to Route-20 West, on to Route - 131 East. Follow the signs to the Recreation Area.

I-84 Exit 1 to Mashapaug Road. Follow the signs to the Dam and Recreation Area.